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  2

Humanity Chooses Knowledge

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Edit: Oops I didn't paste it all.

I think that I have finally found it. Finally, ***finally teased*** it out from the jumbled mess that is human philosophy, history, and religion. After years—actual spirit's haunted fucking ***years***—of research, hundreds if not ***thousands*** of interviews, and no less than ***seventeen*** different research teams... it finally hit me! The ***defining*** feature of humanity! That which at their most basic, primal state drives them as a race... or at least ***one*** such feature.

That's right, I've finally achieved that which two dozen races have ***failed*** to do even after all these years: The 'boiling down' of the galaxy's newest race. It wasn't easy, it ***isn't*** perfect... but it's—at the very least—***not wrong!***

At every twist and turn throughout their myriad years, every ancient conquest, every brutal revolution... humanity chose knowledge. It is their... ***unquenchable*** lust for knowledge that has ***driven*** them from the shelter of the caves and forests that their ancestors inhabited, to the cold dark black alongside the rest of us!

You only need to look at their dominant language to catch a glimpse at this. Many of my fellow researchers—and indeed probably many of ***you***—have heard the old German proverb “curiosity killed the cat.” At first glance, this is a proverb warning against the dangers of curiosity... and it is. But ask yourselves for one moment: ***why in all the hells would any sapient race need a proverb warning them against being curious?***

This... that question right there is the ***beginning***. The starting point, the place that humanity diverges from the rest of us. Every ***single*** other species in the galaxy has no less than half a dozen proverbs extolling the values of being ***more*** curious, several from my own species fairly nearly outright ***beg*** you to be curious. But with humans it's the exact opposite, instead of drilling curiosity into their spawn's heads they drill instead ***restraint, moderation***, and other such synonyms. Because for them... curiosity ***is*** dangerous.

But we'll get back to that, for now let us return to that old German proverb. While for many humans curiosity may have figuratively—and in a few tragic cases ***quite literally***—‘killed the cat,’ for just as many it is the ***single*** most ***rewarding*** experience that they have ever had. Throughout my countless interviews with humans of all ages and sizes, nearly every one had both a time where their curiosity was a great achievement for them and a time where they deeply regret it. This dichotomy is illustrated ***perfectly*** in an English proverb based off of the German one: “Curiosity killed the cat. Satisfaction brought it back, that's why the cat has nine lives.”

Humans find the act of learning or doing something new to be *pleasurable*. And they **especially** love to be right! For many humans, being a person who knows things that not many do or who has experienced things that not many have is a point of pride. That's why you see so many humans *racing* to be **first**! It's in their blood, they *love* the feeling of knowing that they were the first of their kind, or hells even the first among their peers to do something!

And here my friends is where things get dangerous for them. They will strive and strive to be the first one among their ranks to complete some task or uncover some bit of obscure knowledge that they turn a bind eye—or in some cases are **willfully ignorant**—to the dangers. Take their nuclear development program—the now galaxy infamous “Manhattan Project”—as a wonderful example of this. And no, I'm *not* referring to the **urban legend**—that the humans working on the project thought that the bomb might ignite their atmosphere—that gave it its infamy. No, I'm instead referring to the **legitimately insane speed** at which the humans completed this project.

In just over **ten years** they had gone from knowing **literally nothing** about nuclear fission to blowing each other up with it. It's... it's maddening to think about! The previous record—set by the Haaa—was **fourty-eight** years! They developed nuclear weaponry **five times faster than the single most aggressive and warlike race the galaxy has ever seen**...

Dear reader, do you know how many races have had major nuclear disasters? Less than a human has fingers. And out of that depressing pantheon of races, humanity's disasters were **by far** the worst. And if their most popular religions are to be believed... they have *always* been this curious.

Humanity's largest religious family—the Abrahamic religions—teach that humanity started in a bountiful garden. Picture if you will the idyllic forests of Vavrin VI. Lush, bountiful, full of life and beauty. The humans were told that everything in this garden was theirs, from the smallest of insects to the largest of trees, and that they could do with it whatever they wished. The only one rule was that they were not to eat the fruit of one specific tree, for their god had reserved that tree for himself.

Seems an easy enough rule to follow right? A paradise all to themselves wherein they are second only to their god... except, I have until this point neglected to mention the name of that one tree. The single tree that humanity was forbidden to partake from, was the tree of knowledge. Knowledge of what you ask? Knowledge of good and of evil.

I think that you can guess what happened next, but I'm going to say it anyways. They ate the damned fruit. They gave up paradise like no other, immortality, and a whole host of other things... for simple knowledge.

Now to give them some credit, their god's instructions basically boiled down to 'don't do this because I said so.' It's not as though they knew that they were going to be thrown out, and to this day if you tell a human not to do something you sure as all the hells better tell them *why* they shouldn't do it too.

Don't believe me? Well I've done the experiments to prove it. I brought in hundreds of humans for "one-on-one interviews," told them not to do something mundane and innocuous, and then left the room. The results were **astounding**, over 70% of humans would, after a few minutes, do exactly what they were told not to do. Furthermore, roughly half of the humans that didn't were *very clearly* fighting the urge to do so!

This ever-present lust for knowledge explains so much about them. Their fervor for exploration and discovery? They want to be the first ones to know, the first ones to experience everything that this galaxy has to offer. 'What does this taste like,' 'how does that feel,' 'can I go there,' 'can I do this.'

Their uncannily swift technological progress? Knowledge above all else and a curiosity that surpasses their common sense. Plus, the fact that they're willing to trade **actual resources** for technology that they can't figure out on their own doesn't hurt. After all, how could a human put a price on knowledge.

The reason that "stage magic" is so boring to the rest of us? We aren't constantly wondering *how* the magician is doing his tricks like they are. We aren't constantly amazed and curious about the fact that the human on stage has knowledge and skills that we can't even begin to comprehend.

Their truly ridiculous martial prowess? They're constantly thinking dozens of steps ahead. Constantly wondering: "what would happen if we X?" or "could we survive if the enemy did Y?"

Everything that humanity has done is doing is because above all else, whenever they were presented with the choice, humanity chose knowledge. And I'd be willing to bet my left grasping appendage that in the future, they're going to choose knowledge too.

So a bit of a shorter story, but I wanted to get something out since I've been dormant for the past few weeks. The fact that I'm honestly really proud with how this story turned out doesn't hurt either, despite its shortness.

As I said before, my goal is to get out at least one story a week so with any luck you guys will see me again next Sunday!